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Health, Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, International Health Corps Hearings

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August 3, 1987

Press Statement for:

Congressman Mickey Leland and Congressman Henry Waxman

Congressman Mickey Leland (D-TX) and Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) announced today a hearing to be held on a proposal for an International Health Corps (IHC) in the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment.

The International Health Corps would be comprised of an International Emergency Health Service Corps (IEHSC) component to provide direct service delivery for short or intermediate term intervention, and an International Health Development Corps (IHDC) component linked with longer term, country-specific resource development. The IEHSC would provide temporary emergency medical assistance in response to international disasters such as the earthquake in Mexico City, the famine in Ethiopia and the Chernobyl incident. The International Health Development Corps (IHDC) component of the IHC would contribute to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to deal with their own health problems.

Once established, the International Health Corps would also provide an opportunity for a Joint U.S.-Soviet Health Initiative whereby the two countries would work together in assisting the health care needs of developing countries. The Soviet Union and the United States are both signatories to the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 which set forth the goal of "Health for All by the Year 2000," and, in the past have co-operated very successfully in the smallpox eradication program. Yet, at this time, there are no significant collaborative projects to deliver medical services.

Scheduled to testify on the need for such an International Health Corps are: Dr. Roger Egeberg, former Assistant Secretary of Health in the Nixon Administration; Dr. William Foege, former Assistant Secretary of Health in the Carter Administration; and Dr. Kenneth Warren, Director for Health Sciences, Rockefeller Foundation. Also scheduled to testify both on the need of an IHC and possible U.S.-Soviet Joint Health Initiative is Dr. Robert Gayle, known for his work in Chernobyl.

Additional witnesses include: Dr. Richard Bail, author of a similar joint U.S.-Soviet health initiative which has received widespread support; and Dr. Slava Gofberg, Soviet refusenik now practicing in Boston, Massachusetts.

Witness testifying on the desire of American physicians to participate in such an endeavor include: Dr. John Dawson, American Medical Association; Dr. Peter Bolens, Christian Medical Society; and Ms. Preston Reynolds, President, American Medical Students Association.

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The International Health Corps would be comprised of the International Emergency Health Service Corps (IEHSC) and the International Health Development Corps (IHDC). The IEHSC would provide temporary emergency medical assistance in response to international disasters such as the earthquake in Mexico City, the famine in Ethiopia and the Chernobyl incident. The International Health Development Corps (IHDC) would contribute to strengthening the long-term capacity of developing countries to deal with their health problems.

Once established, the International Health Corps would also provide an opportunity for a Joint U.S.-Soviet Health Initiative to improve the health care needs of developing countries. The Soviet Union and the United States are both signatories to the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 which set forth the goal of "Health for All by the Year 2000," and, in the past have co-operated in the very successful smallpox eradication program. The IHC would establish the only significant collaborative project between the United States and the Soviet Union to deliver medical services.

Scheduled to testify on the need for such an International Health Corps and the best structure for it are:

Dr. Roger Egeberg	Former Assistant Secretary of Health in the Nixon Administration;
Dr. William Foege	Former Head of the Centers for Disease Control in the Carter Administration;
Dr. Robert Gayle	UCLA Medical School Department of Medicine (known for his work in Chernobyl)
Dr. Kenneth Warren	Director for Health Sciences, Rockefeller Foundation.

Testifying on the U.S.-Soviet Health Initiative:

Dr. Richard Bail	Harvard Medical School; author of a similar joint U.S.-Soviet health initiative which has received widespread support;
Dr. Slava Gofberg	Cambridge Hospital; Soviet refusenik now practicing in Boston, Massachusetts.

Witness testifying on the desire of American physicians to participate in such an endeavor include:

Dr. Peter Bolens	Christian Medical Society;
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